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An Antitrust law is Not Enough

India's Economy is in Acute Need of a National Competition Policy

Well-contested markets drive efficiency, innovation, consumer welfare and faster growth. As India aspires to become a developed economy by 2047, a crucial reform remains missing: a national competition policy (NCP). Without addressing deep-rooted market distortions, the ambition of Viksit Bharat will remain elusive.

India's growth trajectory has already fallen short of earlier targets, including the \$5 trillion economy goal. A second wave of big-bang reforms—after 1991—is needed, and an NCP can be its cornerstone. Competition in India is often narrowly viewed through antitrust enforcement by the Competition Commission of India (CCI). However, competition law is reactive, intervening only after anti-competitive conduct occurs. Competition policy, by contrast, is preventive and economy-wide. It embeds competition principles into regulations, licensing, procurement and government schemes before distortions arise.

Although a draft NCP was prepared in 2011, it has remained dormant despite repeated recommendations, including from Niti Aayog and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance in 2025. Meanwhile, countries such as Australia have demonstrated tangible GDP gains from comprehensive competition-policy reforms.

A well-designed NCP would promote competitive neutrality, reduce entry barriers, justify preferential treatment transparently, and encourage proportionate regulation. It would benefit consumers through better prices and choice, support small firms, and improve governance coherence.

Competition policy is not bureaucratic formality but an economic necessity. India's success with GST and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code shows the value of structural reform. Reviving the 2011 draft NCP is essential if India is to achieve growth driven by efficiency, innovation and fair competition.

Pradeep S Mehta
Editor

Abridged from an article that appeared in Mint on January 05, 2026. The same can be accessed at: <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/antitrust-law-india-economy-national-competition-policy-gdp-growth-11767363760176.html>

P. S. While the FM in her budget speech on Sunday 1st February spoke about competitiveness and resilience in the first kartavya, the above issue of a competition policy was not included, which is rather sad. Competition policy is an inherent part of the agenda to build competitiveness, without which our industry will not grow. This is one critical reason that our manufacturing share of the GDP has never crossed 15%.

Message for our Readers

The 21st edition of the National Affairs Monthly Brief contains selected published news or comments on trade, regulatory, and governance issues.

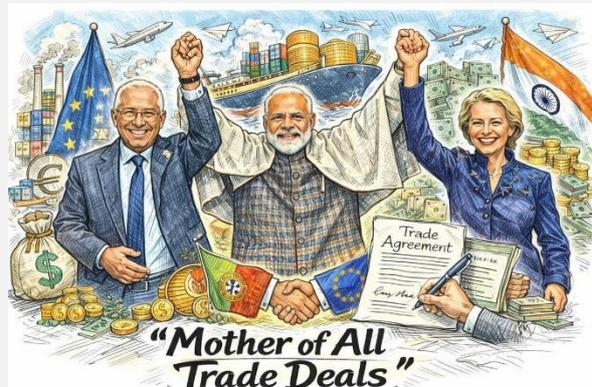
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India-EU FTA: The 'Mother' of all Deals

What makes the India-EU free trade agreement — the "mother of all deals" — unique is not merely its vast scale, covering nearly a quarter of the global economy and population. Nor is it India's unprecedented market access in protected sectors like automobiles, alcohol and government procurement, or the EU's deep access for India's labour-intensive exports such as textiles, garments, handicrafts, gems, jewellery and leather goods.



India Backs Rules-Based Global Economic System



India will continue to support a cooperative and rules-based global economic system even as it strengthens domestic capabilities to protect national interests in a fragmenting world order. This approach aims to counter rising protectionism and supply chain disruptions, positioning India as a resilient, credible global partner for shared progress.

- [Is India's WTO Strategy Harming its Global Trade Future?](#)
Economic Times, January 18, 2026
- [New Labour Codes Drag Down Infosys Profit](#)
Economic Times, January 15, 2026
- [Clarify Status of Environmental Health Bodies](#)
Times of India, January 10, 2026
- [Review of ASEAN-India Trade Pact to Improve Market Access for Companies](#)
The Hindu Business Line, January 08, 2026



Apple Challenges CCI Order in Delhi HC

Apple has moved the Delhi High Court to restrain the Competition Commission of India (CCI) from seeking its global financial records in an ongoing antitrust probe over App Store policies. While Apple **denies** abusing its dominant position, the CCI has reportedly found it guilty, potentially exposing the company to fines of about US\$38bn if calculated on global turnover.



India Proposes New Smartphone Security Rules



India is proposing new security rules for smartphone makers. These rules include source code disclosure and background permission restrictions for apps. Companies like Apple and Samsung are opposing these measures. They cite concerns about corporate secrecy and global privacy policies. The government aims to enhance user security on mobile devices.

- [Final Online Gaming Norms Imminent](#)
Ojasvi Gupta, Financial Express, January 15, 2026
- [Electronics Sector Set to Match IT Growth](#)
Shouvik Das, Mint, January 13, 2026
- [Renewable Norms May Ease for Waste-Based Energy](#)
Twesh Mishra, Economic Times, January 09, 2026
- [Centre May Revoke X's Safe Harbour Status](#)
Subhayan Chakraborty, Economic Times, January 05, 2026



Modi Calls for Mission-Mode Reforms for Viksit Bharat 2047

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged mission-mode reforms across sectors to sustain long-term growth and realise Viksit Bharat by 2047. Interacting with economists at NITI Aayog ahead of the 2026-27 Budget, he stressed world-class capabilities, global integration, and policy alignment with the 2047 vision. Economists highlighted productivity gains and said recent reforms will strengthen India's growth trajectory.



India Revises Traffic Rules



The Indian government has introduced a new rule to improve road safety. Under the updated Motor Vehicles Rules, if a driver commits five or more traffic violations in a year, their driving licence can be suspended or cancelled for three months. The legislation was activated starting from January 01, 2026, with a goal of cutting down the number of accidents on roads brought about by habitual offenders.

- [India Deploys Mobile Stroke Units for Rural Care](#)
Tanushka Dutta, NDTV, January 22, 2026
- [Lakhpati Didi: Women Driving Entrepreneurial Change](#)
Times of India, January 21, 2026
- [How Technology will Transform Farming?](#)
Newsweek, January 21, 2026
- [Banks Join Hands to Tackle Digital Fraud](#)
The New Indian Express, January 09, 2026

Media

- [How To Navigate Global Politics in a Trump-driven Era of Uncertainty](#)
The Asian Age, January 26, 2026
By Pradeep S. Mehta and Amit Dasgupta
- [SIM Binding Push Raises More Questions](#)
Financial Express, January 26, 2026
By Pradeep S Mehta
- [The IndiGo Mess and the Misplaced Narrative Over Competition Law](#)
The Asian Age, January 04, 2026
By Pradeep S Mehta
- [Ensuring the New Telecom Cyber Security Rules Work Better for a Billion Users](#)
Communication Today, January, 2026
By Krishaank Jugiani

Sir Mark Tully, Chronicler of Modern India, Passes Away

Legendary journalist Sir William Mark Tully, a towering chronicler of modern India, passed away at the age of 90 in New Delhi on January 25, 2026. The veteran British journalist's calm and authoritative voice defined the BBC's coverage of India for over three decades. His death marked the end of an era in international journalism and the loss of one of India's most perceptive foreign observers.